

Two forms occur in Kazakhstan, the European or nominate race *P. g. griseigena* and a markedly larger race found in the Balkhash basin *P. g. balchaschensis* Korelov (Dolgushin 1960). The latter appears to be similar in size to the eastern form known as *P. g. holboelli* (Reinhardt) (Dementiev & Gladkov 1951). It is noteworthy that the Balkhash form has wing measurements comparable with the Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* while its weight is only half that of this species.

In the circumstances it seems surprising that the Rednecked Grebe has not been recorded earlier in the subcontinent and we hope that this note may stimulate closer scrutiny of any large grebe seen in the subcontinent.

WILDFOWL SURVEY,
c/o 11-F GULBERG,
POST BAG 704,
LAHORE,
WEST PAKISTAN,
January 31, 1967.

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8. UNUSUAL METHOD OF FISHING BY LITTLE EGRET *EGRETTA GARZETTA* LINNAEUS

On Sunday 4 June 1967, I was at Powai Lake, Salsette, Bombay (with my wife and children), when far out in the distance we saw a couple of egrets behaving in a curious manner. They were not far apart and at first sight it looked as if they were hesitating before 'landing' on the water—perhaps not being sure how deep it was. However, they did not settle, and flew towards us close over the water. As they came near it was apparent that this low flying disturbed large numbers of small fish (*Chela* sp.) which skimmed ahead over the

water. The egrets, now recognised as the Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) had their necks extended and the 'undercarriage' (legs and feet) half-way down. We did not actually see them catch a fish but they were no doubt interested in them. The flight was over 400-500 yards. I do not remember having seen or read of an egret or heron fishing in this manner.

The level of the water in the lake was exceptionally low and the anglers were having a field day. Our boat was preceded by a continuous stream of 2-3 inch *Chela* sp., jumping out and skimming along the surface, while an occasional Rohu (*Labeo rohita*) jumped high. A 1-lb Rohu and many *Chela* jumped into the boat.

A week later (11 June) we were there again and saw six or seven Little Egrets regularly fishing in the manner described earlier. This time however, they kept their necks half-drawn in, enabling them to jab at and catch the fish. They flew around in wide circles, often two or three together and appeared to be catching quite a few fish. Two larger egrets (probably *Egretta alba*) and a Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) stayed on the shore and continued to fish in the normal heron/egret style.

FAIZ & Co.,

75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,

BOMBAY,

June 15, 1967.

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

9. THE WHISTLING TEAL [*DENDROCYGNA JAVANICA* (HORSFIELD)] IN THE CALCUTTA ENVIRONS

Recent notes on the Whistling Teal [*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield)] around Calcutta remind me of the large numbers that it was possible to see in every village pond of any size when I was a student at Shantiniketan and at Calcutta (1914-1924). On the larger pieces of water, flocks of a couple of hundred birds were not uncommon and I must admit that we used to shoot them all the year round. The breeding season must have been about the middle of the rainy season, for from the end of July onwards I saw young ducklings through August to November. I never saw a nest on water and thought that the favourite place was the Screw-Pine or *Keora*, the culms of which used to be found along water-courses and nullahs all over Bengal. The plant is armed with formidable thorns. I remember a teal flying out of the bush of a Screw-Pine which I